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Lawrence University

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Celebrate! Lawrence University Festival Marks 30th Year of Family Fun and Entertainment

Posted on: April 30th, 2003 by Rick Peterson

Celebrate!, Lawrence University's popular annual spring festival of the arts celebrates its 30th birthday Saturday, May 10. The family-oriented celebration of community life in the Fox Cities runs 9 a.m. – 6 p.m. on Lawrence's downtown Appleton campus and is free and open to the public.

Celebrate! 2003 will feature its usual array of live music, a lively family area with a diverse mix of kid-friendly performers and attractions, more than 160 arts and crafts booths of hand-crafted and fine arts items for sale along with food and beverage concessions featuring international treats as well as Wisconsin favorites.

An eclectic mix of popular music groups from throughout the Midwest will be featured on the Wriston Stage, located in the amphitheatre between the Wriston Art Center and the Lawrence Memorial Union.

The Madison-based band German Art Students opens the Wriston stage at 11:15 a.m. The New Wave rock quartet plays mostly original material, crafting songs with lyrics that are witty without being smug, intelligent without being pretentious.

At 1:15 p.m., the five-piece acoustic group Paradise String Band performs American and Irish folk music, bluegrass and old-time traditional folk music.

Wisconsin's Tasty Wanton, which is drawing national attention for its original music full of infectious grooves, soaring harmonies and stunning melodies, takes the stage at 2:45 p.m. The five-piece blues, funk and rock band recently signed with Head West

Records.

Closing out the Wriston stage at 4:30 is the Oshkosh-based band Road Trip, one of the state's hardest-working musical groups. The six-piece rock band regularly plays more than 150 shows each year and has opened for several national acts, including Sheryl Crow, Stir, ZZ Top, REO Speedwagon, Ted Nugent, Fleetwood Mac and Foreigner.

The Shattuck Stage, located on the Conservatory of Music porch, will feature a daylong blend of the best new and seasoned jazz performers from the Lawrence campus and beyond.

Back by popular demand, Lawrence's percussion ensemble Sambistas kick things off at 11 a.m. with their infectious Brazilian rhythms.

The nine-piece tour de force Phat Phunktion takes the stage at 12 noon, combining the polish of Top 40 with the smoothness of '60s soul and the raw energy of '70s funk.

At 2 p.m., the Sullivan Trio brings jazz riffs to the stage, followed at 3:45 p.m. by Recycled Percussion, the four-piece band that turns recycled and salvaged items into choreographed percussion. Music veterans of concerts in more than 40 states, Recycled Percussion has performed with such notables as LL Cool J, Godsmack, Staind and They Might Be Giants, created halftime shows for the NBA and NFL and been featured on numerous television shows, including "Crook and Chase," "Talk Soup," and CBS' "Late Show with David Letterman."

Appleton's own Big Band Reunion rounds out the Shattuck stage at 5 p.m. with its trademark repertoire of jazz tunes and big-band classics.

The Family Stage, located on the lawn north of Ormsby Hall, plays

host to a range of artists and activities aimed at the younger festival goers. Dick Stader, a certified dive master and retired U.S. Navy master chief machinist mate, opens the stage at 10:30 a.m. with a scuba diving demonstration geared especially for children.

Ventriloquist Dave Parker with Skippy and all his friends will entertain at 12 noon, followed on stage by caricaturist Paul Merklein and his “Great Big Faces” at 1:30 p.m. Merklein also will be available for free caricatures throughout the rest of the day.

Rick Kelley brings rock and roll with a message for children of all ages to the stage at 2:45 p.m., and local favorite Chad Harkins presents his unique puppet show at 4:30 p.m.

In addition, the family area will feature a petting zoo, pony rides, carriage rides, inflatable attractions, a climbing wall, a mechanical bull as well as numerous children’s games, exhibits and activities. There will be roving artists throughout the day, including a special appearance by the “Renaissance Man,” a wandering bard who presents Shakespeare to passers-by and Dizzy D. Clown making free balloon creations for the kids and clowning around.